

I AIN'T MARCHING ANYMORE



an sds publication



TACOMA SDS ★

STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Who are students?

To be a student is merely to be one who desires to learn. Some of us are students of a university, but we are also students of our own lives, of our local community and spheres of influence, of a world that is changing at the pace of history. We are professors, staff, citizens, and workers. But what unites us is a shared effort to understand.

What is democracy?

We are concerned with democracy in the truest sense of the word: the freedom of all people to rule themselves. Democracy permeates all aspects of our lives. Democracy is not passive observation, or participation at sanctioned dates and places; it is to continually evaluate and engage events, policies, and institutions that threaten our voices and ability to act.

Why society?

Society is larger than neighborhoods, cities, or nations; it is that formless entity that contains the totality of relationships between all life. The society we envision is a truly democratic one, in which we are all students of each other and teacher to none.

VISIT US ONLINE AT:

Studentsforademocraticsociety.org/tacoma

Talking to mom about the war

There are two political factions in my family. I distinguish them according to their sources of news, i.e., the mostly Fox News camp and the mostly Blogosphere camp, but the division existed long before those media came along.

When I was a kid, the division provided the starting point for many family conversations. It was always important – a family standard -- to bring in the best, latest information. My dad was a professor, and being part of an academic community meant there was always a graduate student or visiting professor who had some special insight. Standing around the fire after a meal, somebody would say something like: Hey, you're from country X ... what's really going on there? And then we would have at it. Our conversations were not always entirely friendly, but I always felt the family was a little stronger for having them. I like to think that mom, champion of the Fox News camp, felt the same way.

Ah, the good old days of family political discourse. We don't do that anymore. Both sides seem to have shifted to positions from which it is too hard to listen to one another.

I've thought about why this is so. As a member of the blogosphere group, I have found that it helps immeasurably to have modern technology to back up an argument. That's a good thing, but the flip side of better information is testier, more emotive questions. Fox News'ers in the family used to argue, for example, that the US didn't really destroy Chilean democracy in the early 1970s, we just gave it a little nudge. Now that we know that US intervention was decisive – from declassified CIA documents on the web – the discussion becomes not a matter of whether we did or didn't, but the much more dangerous and emotive “why?”

As for members of the Fox News camp, many have decided that conversation is not worth the anger that wells up inside them when politics comes up. Political opinion has become branded in a way that it never used to be, a part of one's identity. I'm not talking abstractions here. One in-law was fired for an “anger management” failure triggered by a family discussion about the Iraq war. And when another family member complained about Bush to her sister, the sister replied angrily, how you would like it if somebody criticized dad that way?

What a time for educated discourse to disappear from the family! With no draft, the family's youngsters are not at risk. On the other hand, without that risk, families are less serious about grand ventures like war-making. And that's a very bad disconnect.

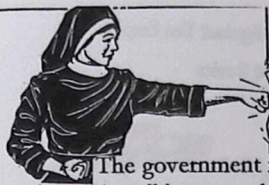


One could argue that it's hardly important what one family talks about, but I argue the opposite. Families – and more generally, communities – need to find ways to resolve the national issues we face today because they are the backbone of our democracy. Informed political discourse needs to start at home, because if it doesn't, how can the nation be expected to engage in it?

There are a lot of questions about our current aggression in Iraq I would like to call up my mom to discuss: Does an undeclared war with an indeterminate end justify indefinite suspension of civil liberties? Why are the media giants uncritical of the premises under which the war is being conducted? Why do we accept that the Geneva Conventions are negotiable in a war on terror? These are really instances of a much bigger question I would like answers to, especially from people who, like my parents, sacrificed greatly in WWII. It is this: How could you sacrifice so much and so wisely to fight fascism in your youth, but fail even to recognize it today when it stands at your door? Or, more to the point: Does it really not bother you that this phone conversation could be tapped?

Not able to have this conversation, we can't stand together to oppose the immense forces that seek to destroy our democracy.

Like my father, I am also a university professor. And as a professor, I am very much aware of a university's special responsibility to promote informed discourse, to make such discourse so reflexive and well-greased that all of our graduates go back to their homes and communities to engage in informed political discourse, to ask hard questions and not accept anything but the honest truth, and take whatever action that discourse leads them to take. And maybe one day I'll even get up the courage to call up mom to talk about the war.



The government is supposed to be the voice of the people. Isn't that what we've all been taught? The government is a service for the people. They are here for us.

Sadly, it seems as though things have taken a hairpin turn in the other direction. Today, if you look around the political scene seems to have taken a very "if you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" sort of mentality. It isn't just differences in ideologies that are causing this, but the whole manner in which politics and personal wealth seems to be inseparably intertwined.

We all know that possibly the easiest way to have your opinions heard by the government is by voting. We also all know that really only half of Americans do so. If we take a closer look at the small section of those who do vote, we are able to see that in families that earned \$75,000 or more, 90% voted. However, in families that earned \$15,000 or less, only 50% voted.

This means that although the government is supposed to represent everyone, it's primarily only the wealthy that are being heard. The rich get their voices heard by voting, so that really the only issues being addressed are those in the favor of the wealthy, or these issues are easily swayed in their favor. The rich also have the advantage of having time and money to burn for lobbying. The loudest are those who are heard.

The less advantaged, as it were, are very capable of falling into a slump of apathy and discouragement. It's pretty logical, if you think about it. If you already know that no one is going to listen to you, why make the effort? Without these voices the major part of America is missing from the polls, and from politics.

These two stigmas when put together paint a pretty bleak picture of the future. If the rich act on only things that concern themselves, or things that help them, the rest of the population will be pushed aside, forgotten, or crumpled up by the political machine. The rich get rich and the poor get poorer, it would seem so at least.

Not only do the rich already have an advantage through funds, lobbying and voting, they also seem to have more of the support of Washington. Congressman and Senators are more likely to put their votes where they know the monetary support to be. Policy makers, law makers and the like are almost three times as likely to listen in support of measures in favor of the wealthy.

There is no way that this government is objective. There is no way that this government is the voice of the people. This government is becoming nothing more than a tool to be used at the disposal of the rich.

Strike A Blow Against The Empire

David Rovics

When the rich man on the TV

Said this world's mine



When he asked which side you're on

Told you to step in line

For his war of conquest

When he talked about your wallet

Said it was in your interest

Did you shrug your shoulders

And do as you were told

OK! Hang a flag in your window

AMERICAN And buy the goods that you were sold

Or did you shut off his craven image

And call the man a liar

Did you strike a blow against the empire

PACIFIC

Equator

AFRICAN

OCEAN

When they were rounding up your neighbors

You know the ones with darker skin

Clerks and teachers, engineers

With names like Sami and Mazin

When they were breaking down the doors

And taking them away

Holding them on secret charges

Hidden from the light of day

What did you tell their children

When you had a chance to meet

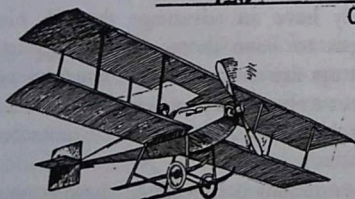
Could you look them in the eye

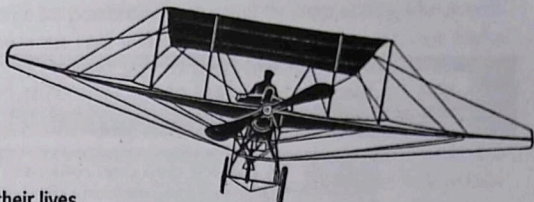
Or did you walk past them on the street

Could you say that you stood up

When their lives were on the wire

Did you strike a blow against the empire





As the bombs were falling

And the children lost their lives

Lying broken on the pavement

As the ambulance arrives

As the soldiers opened fire

With their heavy guns

Could you hear the demonstrators hit the ground

See how their red blood runs

What were you doing

In those fateful times

Did you raise your voice

Against these awful crimes

Were you hiding in your bedroom

When the situation was so dire

Or did you strike a blow against the empire

And when the time had come

And the Reich was at your door

When the fascist state was here

And they brought home the war

When the Gestapo was in the city

And they had really taken power

When there was nothing left to do

Here in the final hour

Did you find a place to run to

And hope to live a few more years

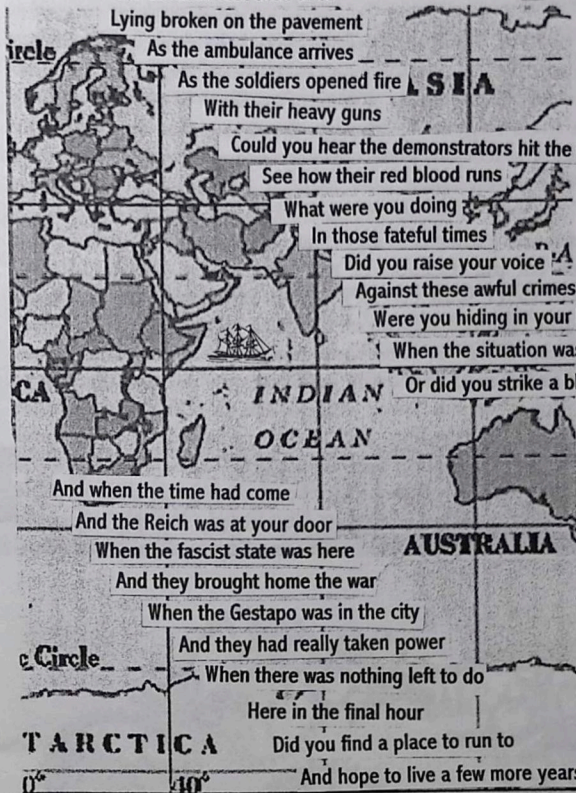
When the slaughter was around you

Did you cover up your ears

Or did you set your sights

Take your aim and fire

Did you strike a blow against the empire



The Problem and Solution of the Bourgeois Anti-war Movement

(A call for civil disobedience)

On January 6, 2006, President Bush delivered the State of the Union Address in Washington DC. Simultaneously, a crowd of approximately 150 protesters assembled in Seattle under a banner reading "The World Can't Wait! Drive out the Bush Regime!" Although the slogan was appealing, the event failed to provide a feasible plan, or even a suggestion, for bringing about the demands of the movement.

The demonstrators gathered in an offset plaza near the Seattle Center where they remained for the duration of the State of the Union Address. Equipped with World Can't Wait (WCW) posters and umbrellas, the mass remained stagnant and endured countless speakers regurgitating one-liners and chanting "Bush step down" as if he were going to all of a sudden do so. One of the speeches even encouraged the protesters to befriend the police. The same Seattle Police which were responsible for the innumerable beatings, gassings, arrests, stampeding, and torture of hundreds of peaceful demonstrators at the WTO Seattle protests in 1999. After an egotistic electronic/metal band stopped tormenting the crowd with their terrible sound and irrelevant lyrics, the assembly disbanded, leaving everyone confused and unaware as to why they had been standing in the rain for three hours.

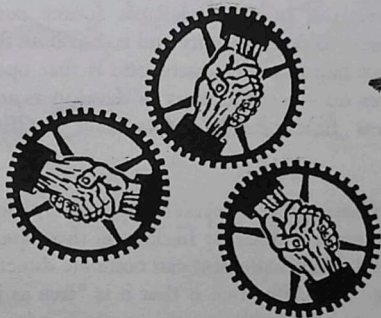


To those who see the anti-war movement as nothing more than a social gathering, the event was quite successful. To those dedicated to putting an end to war and exploitation, the WCW anti-war tea party was a slap in the face to all revolutionary ideals. For three years the anti-war movement has been beset with similar gathering and similar disappointments. May it be A.N.S.W.E.R. staff assisting the police in barricading protesters at their very own demonstrations or a WCW ice cream social, one thing is straight, we have had enough.

Revolution will never be permitted; we need to stop acting like it will. Standing in a plaza for hours on end will only dissolve our moral, not end a war. Now is the time for the student left to grab hold of the dying anti-war movement and start organizing in a successful manner. Civil disobedience and labor solidarity are the methods by which students can make an impact on the institutions that are responsible and/or necessary for not only US imperialism but widespread poverty and racism at home. The war will persist as long as we remain bureaucratic and passive. It is impossible for the war to continue, as is, if we are aggressive, disobedient, and determined. It is about time we start doing what is right, not what we are told. With the unification of the student left and the labor unions, we can and will end the war in Iraq.

The anti-war movement has reached a point of evolutionary transformation in which it must now adopt mass direct action and civil disobedience while abandoning its present connotation as a passive movement of immobility.

When we participate in direct action it is important to keep in mind the goals we fight for and how big of an effect we can have by just participating in a small act of civil disobedience. Think not what the repercussions will be if you participate in an action, think what the repercussions will be if you do not.





open source lifestyle

The Internet is an amazing thing. Just this weekend I was downloading the latest version of my office suite. Yes, it is one that is supported by a large corporation. I did not pay for it, but I was not pirating the software either. I was downloading OpenOffice, an open source program.

Open source is a term not everyone is familiar with. In recent years it has become a buzzword among the hackers, geeks and misfits of the computer world. According to Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia operating under a similar principle, open source software is publicly available source code released under a license that allows users to copy, modify and redistribute the code without paying for it. The most important characteristic is that open source software relies on – and thrives on – a community of developers and users to provide upgrades and new functionality, rather than a CEO attempting to maximize profit.

OpenOffice (available from openoffice.org) is a project backed by Sun Microsystems (although most development is done by hackers in their spare time). They have created a full-featured office suite that can compete directly with the ubiquitous Microsoft Office. The difference is that it is "free as in beer" (you do not have to pay to get it and use it) and "free as in freedom" (you can do whatever you please with it). By the way, OpenOffice can read and save into Microsoft's formats with ease, so old Office documents won't be unusable!

Open source is more than just free software. It is the democratization of information and technology. These community projects strive to fulfill the needs of those who have been disenfranchised from the high-tech world we live in. Open source operating systems can run on old, inexpensive hardware that the Mac OS or Windows never could. Also, obscure programs are available that no corporation cares about providing.

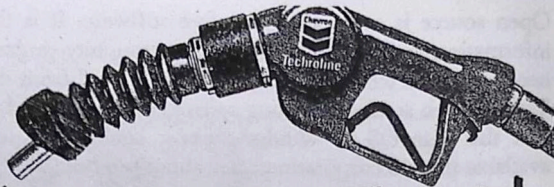
The open source movement represents a societal model that is open to cooperation, new ideas and generosity. It is time to apply that model to the world around us.

But how can we demand this spirit of cooperation and democracy from our own institutions? Students and faculty at MIT have already started. Their OpenCourseWare project makes course material available to students and the public for free. Imagine getting an MIT education for nothing but time and effort. It is up to us to advocate for this new open culture!

OPEN
SOURCE
IS YOUR
FRIEND...



Andrew Moll is a surly left-wing technologist who's ready to stop paying college tuition.



GLOBALIZATION

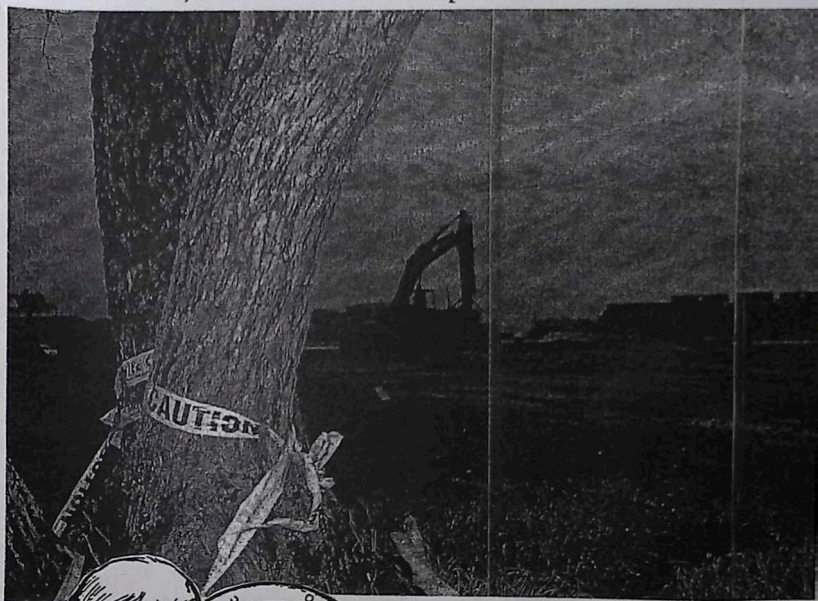
The effects of globalization have been felt worldwide. Globalization can be defined as "the increasing integration of the world in terms of communications, culture, and economics" (International Relations, J. Goldstein). McDonalds has locations everywhere, offering the American menu as well as a regionally specific menus with local favorites and American Online has gone international with services provided in Europe and Asia. Proponents agree that globalization offers more opportunities for increased trade, new technology, and integration. Scholars argue that rich and poor are benefiting from globalization because multinational corporations are more likely to go to poorer countries, open up factories, and offer thousands of jobs to the local population, boosting the economy. Globalization makes life easier; there is no doubt about it. But there are negative consequences of globalization that must be taken into consideration such as the homogenization of cultures and the stunting of developed countries.

The American culture is one of the most well-known and publicized cultures in the world. Not only are our fashions, music, and films popular, but our politics are being forced upon other "undemocratic" countries. Other cultures are turning into American clones with the spread of our ideas as "right" through globalization. Individuality is no longer accepted and encouraged; rather it is being shut out of the world completely. The idea of democracy where the people have various freedoms and a rights to expression is fine and dandy and it works (or does it?) for the United States. This does not mean that it will work for the entire world. I am not advocating human rights violations or the oppression of women. I am simply stating that not all rights are universal and that, as a country, we need to understand diversity.

Another repercussion of globalization is the emphasis on technology. In order to maintain a high position in the global economy, it is essential for countries to be able to offer something that not only connects with other products, but that is advanced enough to be in high demand. Unfortunately, developing countries do not have the education system, not to mention the money, to be exporting technologically advanced products. Therefore, developing countries are further being pushed aside and left behind because raw materials are not as important in the global economy anymore. In order

for developing countries to fully develop, they need the money and resources to get simple infrastructure like roads, water, health care, education, and electricity before they can concentrate on gaining a position in the market and developing.

There are benefits of globalization that I will not deny. Information is easier to access and communication is easier due to E-mail and the Internet. Nongovernmental organizations can raise awareness and gain support by using these new communication methods. But I think that often times we forget that not everyone benefits from globalization and that other countries need more than just the Internet to develop.



*"Have you been getting enough **internet** lately?"*

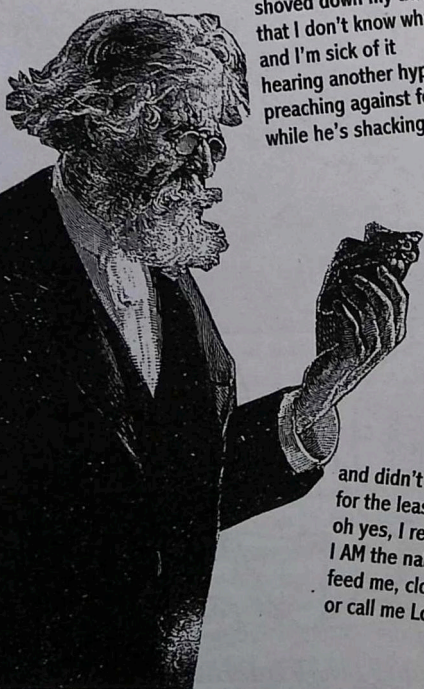
extreme words for the extreme right

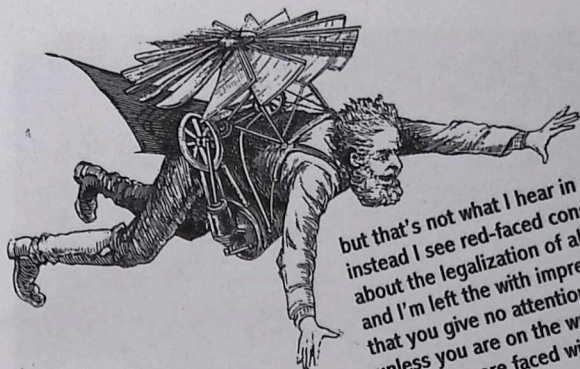
when is this all gonna change
this idiotic attitude
that what matters is what you say
and not what you do
and when we gonna lose
our extreme-ass views on predestination
that keep us believing only the white and the rich
receive salvation
did it ever occur to you
that the last to hear the good news
were the white nations

I've had so much bullshit
shoved down my throat from the pulpit
that I don't know what's right anymore
and I'm sick of it
hearing another hypocrite
preaching against fornication
while he's shacking up with prostitutes on his vacation

what color was Jesus?
and what did his daddy do?
can we say, "Middle East"
his skin was olive, at least
and his collar was blue

and didn't he say something about justice
for the least of us
oh yes, I remember:
I AM the naked, I AM the poor
feed me, clothe me
or call me Lord no more





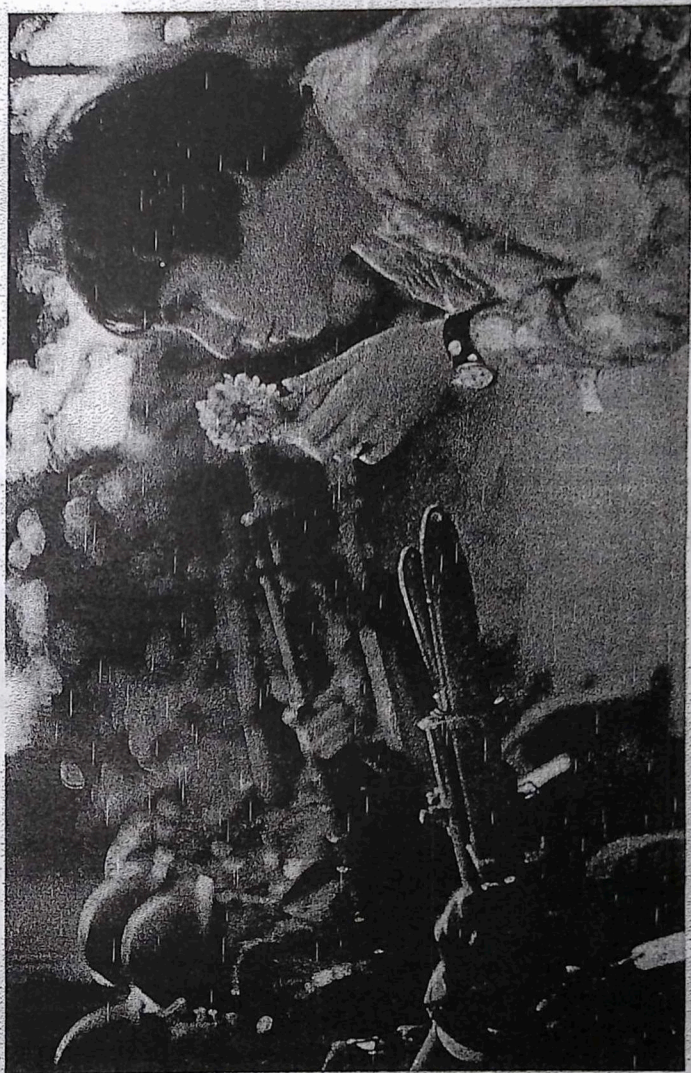
but that's not what I hear in your congregation
instead I see red-faced consternation
about the legalization of alternative orientation
and I'm left the with impression
that you give no attention to oppression
unless you are on the wrong side of the equation
unless you are faced with starvation
dehydration or nuclear annihilation

and dare I mention
the violation of the Geneva convention
in the treatment of those in indefinite detention

Oh my God, forgive our transgressions





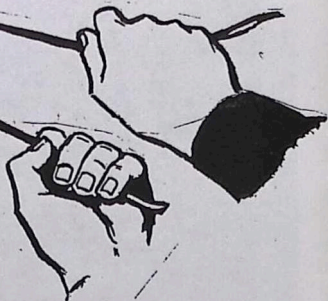


FRENCH

STUDENTS

AND

LABOR



France's new tactics to combat youth unemployment has ignited riots across Paris and ten other cities within the country. With nation-wide unemployment held at 9% unemployment among youth accounts for 20% of its population. The First Employment Contract (CPE) is a two-year arrangement for under-26-year-olds which employers can break off at any time without reason. The government, and in particular the French Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin, believes that by not mandating business owners to award a full time contract to people age 26 and under until after two years of employment, businesses will be more willing to employ youth in large numbers. After two years the contract would be extended to the standard full time contracts awarded those other than 26. In other words, more businesses will hire youth knowing that they can fire them just as easily. Furthermore employers would no longer be responsible for supplying social security to its ex-employees after six months. Such a contract undermines safe guards against unfair labor practices and job security for youth. Beginning in early January 2006, students organized sit-ins inside a number of University Administration buildings across the country. While student labor unions hold their ground and refuse to negotiate until the law is repealed in full students have taken to the streets to demonstrate against a contract designed to free up business constraints, allowing more flexibility to hire and fire young French workers. On March 10th, students participated in a three day long sit-in at Sorbonne, a University in Paris. Union leaders say that the numbers marching against the government policies have grown to 1.5 million people. Government resistance and control over protests has also grown as authority's worry that student protests will encourage further dissent throughout suburbs tense after the recent riots last November. Riot police are arresting more and more students and as some violence erupts, the CPE is becoming less and less popular among French civilians. Bruno Julliard, president of students' union UNEF, speaking in general about recent protests says, "If the government wants to continue using force... then we are heading towards a serious conflict."

"A Dialogue in and Exploration of Radical Feminist Utopian Communalism"

Emma is an anarcha-feminist and Helen is a socialist feminist. They meet one day at their local Food Not Bombs feed, and their discussion weaves through ideas about the role of the State, radical feminism, communalism, and utopia. In this exploration of their own and one another's philosophies, they engage and challenge one another's worldviews and find common cause for struggle.

Emma: Hey, how's it going?

Helen: Hey, it's going well. How are you doing?

Emma: I'm good. Are you here to help feed?

Helen: Yeah, I am. I heard about Food Not Bombs from a friend, so I thought I'd check it out.

Emma: Yeah, that's totally cool. Want some soup? *Hands Helen a cup.*

Helen: Sure, that sounds good. *Takes the soup.* Thanks.

Emma introduces Helen to other people at the feed and they sit down to serve food. They continue to talk while they serve.

Emma: So, are you from around here? What do you spend your time doing?

Helen: Yeah, I've lived here for a few years. I work a lot; we're trying to organize. I do some other activism like counter-recruiting and distributing socialist propaganda.

Emma: That's cool. I'm new to the area. I've been moving around some, and I'm living with some friends here. I've been doing Food Not Bombs and some networking and other activities. I'm trying to meet other radicals and get them together for dialogue and collective action. There doesn't seem to be a lot of radical activity here.

Helen: Yeah, there's not a lot. Activism is growing, though. It's an exciting time to be here, trying to raise the level of activism and coordination. I didn't even know Food Not Bombs was here. I'd never heard of it before.

Emma: My friends and I recently started it. I heard there used to be feeds here, but I think that was years ago.

Helen: That's really cool. I really like this idea of people getting together and directly feeding people who are hungry. But it's really ridiculous that we have to because the government isn't doing its job.

Emma: Wait, what's the government's job?

Helen: To redistribute the wealth of the people, in the form of taxes, to make sure that everyone gets food, housing, clothing, and basic necessities to live.

Emma: Hmmm. The way I see it, the government's job is to support corporations, steal the people's money, and oppress anyone who's not rich, white, and male. We can't depend on the government to feed people or support their best interests because that would be against the nature of the State. That's why I'm here feeding people.

Helen: That's what most governments have done, but I don't think that's the nature of government. It depends on how the State is organised.

Emma: We haven't seen any examples of the State providing for all of people's needs while allowing them freedom. The Scandinavian social democracies and Cuba are the closest examples, but I'm sure you know they're still capitalist and oppressive. And in all the "socialist" experiments, women didn't achieve equal status. As for the nature of the government, at best, it is supposed to operate democratically, by representing peoples' interests. But peoples' interests cannot be truly represented. And the people who make up government really make the decisions. The State is hierarchical and alienates the decision makers from the people and enables the decision makers to make decisions which benefit them—the elites.

Helen: Well, you just explained why those countries haven't met the socialist ideal. They were still capitalist. Things might have been different if they didn't have the über capitalist pressure of US imperialism against them. And what examples of anarchism have worked? Even in the anarchist feminist movement in Argentina in the late 1800s, there was male resistance to women's demands for equal treatment. Besides, there are ways of making the people elected to the government accountable to those who vote for them.

Emma: There are small-scale anarchist experiments which enable gender equality, and I'm sure there are small-scale socialist ones as well. So maybe the political-social-economic system itself doesn't guarantee gender, racial, or other kinds of equality, but we need to actively work, with our brothers,

sisters, people of colour, and the working and poor classes toward eliminating patterns and habits of patriarchy and racism.

Helen: Yeah, I can agree with that.

Emma: But I think that socialists need to make a conscious effort to go beyond its emphasis on only economic exploitation and embrace issues of feminism and racism. In Argentina, the anarchist feminists pointed out the subordination of women not only as workers but as victims of the State, the Church, and family. There was power exercised over women in marriage and families who were seeking freedom to have relationships outside these institutions. The anarchist emphasis on oppression and power relations opened up a space within which women could be seen simultaneously as victims of society and victims of male authority.

Helen: That's true, and in the past, and to some extent in current circles, there has been resistance to feminist demands, within both anarchism and socialism, on the basis that workers' liberation must come first. But I think within the last thirty years socialists have done a good job of going beyond merely economic exploitation concerns, and feminists have formed traditions within socialism that have taken both feminist analysis and socialism to new levels.

They pause their conversation to talk to a homeless person they serve.

Emma: But back to anarchist experiments, it's hard because in general we anarchists don't believe there is any one vision of society for everyone. Some believe that future societies should arise from spontaneous uprisings and revolutions. Some believe we should abandon civilisation and live in the forest, reconnecting to our wild past. But that's the beauty of anarchy. *She pulls out a notebook.* As Emma Goldman said, "Anarchism, at least as I understand it, leaves posterity free to develop its own particular systems, in harmony with its needs. Our most vivid imagination cannot foresee the potentialities of a race set free from external restraints. How, then can anyone assume to map out a line of conduct for those to come? We, who pay dearly for every breath of fresh air, must guard against the tendency to fetter the future. If we succeed in clearing the soil from the rubbish of the past and the present, we will leave to posterity the greatest and safest heritage of all ages." *She pauses for a moment after reading.* But it's difficult for people to accept that there aren't step-by-step plans to achieve a more just and equal society. But there have been, and are, small-scale examples to study and learn from. And there are ways of planting seeds. We can create prefigurative alternatives here and now, staging interstitial revolutions. In

this, we can work to cast off prejudice, racism, sexism, and patriarchy with our sisters and brothers, so when the revolution comes, we'll have less need for transition. It's like this quote I have from Ryan Harvey, a folk artist from Riotfolk. *She pulls out a piece of paper from her backpack and reads it.* "The system is the thought process we use, it's the little things we do to each other every day, it's the shit we fall for... In order to fight the system, we must combat the culture of destruction that [we] all participate in and work our way out of it, together!"

They both pause and let that thought sink in.

Helen: Yeah, that's right on. On a sort of tangent, if we radicals, especially Anarchists, are just that in our politics—too radical—we face the risk of alienating potential supporters.

Emma: Yeah, that's true, but if we beg for small reforms from the State, we'll be lucky to get those minimal reforms.

Helen: Yeah, you're right on that. I think we can both say that we can't forget about working and poor people, while still focusing on women and people of colour. So as our struggle embraces and is partially comprised of working class people, how do we network with them, fight in solidarity with them, and join their struggle, while still maintaining radical politics that that doesn't beg for reforms?

Emma: I think there are issues and struggles that we can embrace that may not necessarily be considered radical, maybe even seen as reformist, that will benefit working and poor people now. Something I've been struggling with is the balance between reforms that maintain the system, prolonging suffering, and ensuring that people have adequate food, water, housing, healthcare, and education. If anarchist struggle is so anti-reformist, will it alienate working class people who struggle for reforms such as living wage, unionisation, healthcare, and the like? It's interesting to note that Emma Goldman opposed women's suffrage because she saw it as women ensuring their own continued oppression.

Helen: That's an important question. What I've been interested in lately is working class, woman-specific issues and struggles, or issues that hit women the hardest, as a result of patriarchy and capitalism, like poverty, single mother situations, ridiculous daycare costs, and prostitution. Not just in this country, but around the world. And do we need the State to enforce human rights in this regard?

Emma: Yeah, those are totally important issues. And they definitely inter- with and are caused by bigger issues like patriarchy and authority. Women should be free from patriarchal authority, with total equality; maybe certain privileges in some cases that men cannot enjoy. I mean women doubly oppressed; not just by bourgeois society, but also by men. By wage slavery and the institution of marriage. And by religion. They're oppressed, even. The old anarchy-feminist slogan, "No God, No Boss, No Husband" remains as relevant today as it was over one hundred years ago. Women need freedom over their sexuality and reproduction. We should work for that here, with all women, and declare solidarity with women around the world who are fighting the entire system of patriarchy and authority and fighting for reforms like healthcare, daycare, education, and better working conditions. And you mentioned the anarchist feminist movement in Argentina. I think one of the issues in that case was that men and women wouldn't have been able to claim autonomy from their husbands because of the patriarchal structure of the whole society; they would have had a hard time surviving without their husbands. So the struggle for individual autonomy was too radical for the system at the time. But reforms wouldn't have changed the whole society, so nothing would have changed. It's a paradox. And what about marriage? Like Emma Goldman, I think free love should reign, and marriage should be abolished, with people of all sexual orientations free to form relationships, unions freely entered into and ended. *She pulls a notebook from her backpack and reads from it.* "The alliance should be formed ...not as it is now, to give the woman a support and home but because the love is there, and that state of affairs can only be brought about by an internal revolution, in short, Anarchy." But how is the average American woman going to respond to this radical idea?

Helen: So what can we do about these issues? You may not agree, but I think the government should give free universal healthcare, daycare, and education, as a starting point.

Emma: Well, that's one approach, and I wouldn't oppose those activists working for that sort of change, as long as they demand, not beg, for it. Another, and I think better, way to do it is to organise community spaces for these services, similar to Food Not Bombs. I think communalism can be beneficial to women and poor people, and to everyone, really. We could create community centres for shared childcare, cooking, household work, and of course men should do at least an equal share of the work. We can find physical spaces for these centres by squatting and reclaiming the Commons. The notions of communes and cohousing could be applied and learned from as types of living environments that enable us to share work and the results, more easily.

Helen: Yeah, that sounds cool. I would support that, but I don't see why we can't pressure the government to support these kinds of programs, as well. Maybe it could be done similar to Venezuela. The government could provide funding for these services, and the communities could organise them how they want.

Emma: I really love talking about what could be, and what we can do now to create a more equal, communal society where work is shared and there is no such thing as money. Hold on. *She flips through her notebook and finally settles on a page and reads from it.* "Utopias do exert enormous influence over the actual course of historical events. Sometimes they are so promptly incorporated into political practice ... that there is hardly time for the glue to dry under their utopian label; sometimes they are deemed to have been brought into reality and then they imperceptibly merge into conservative ideologies."

Helen: Oh, wow. Did you write that?

Emma: No, that's from a Polish sociologist. It came to my mind when we were talking about communalism.

Helen: That's really interesting. Most people dismiss the idea of utopia, but the quote expresses that utopian thinking plays an important role in shaping political reality. It also shows the hidden danger of utopian thinking. That's really crazy to think about. That's really inspiring. We should work toward a utopia, even if it's by definition unreachable, because if we aim for any less, we'll get much less. If we're going to struggle, and maybe even lose our lives, we might as well aim for everything, the totality of our vision of an equal society; a communal society, where people share labour to produce meaningful things and provide necessary services, and share the fruits of our labour as well as the disappointments. I mean that's the goal of socialism; not very different from the vision of anarchy.

Emma: Yeah, totally. Very well said. Hey, there's a book you might enjoy. It's called *The Dispossessed* by Ursula LeGuin. I've read a fair amount of books on alternatives to capitalist society, most based on real life experiments or theoretical economic systems. But the most valuable in my learning has actually been this work of fiction. It sounds kind of crazy, and I guess it is, but it's about a group of rebels that lived on this Earth-like planet, and left to set up an anarchist society on their moon. It's an amazing book for me, because it really imagines what an anarchist, or true communist, society could look like, how it might function. And imagination is so important in any social movement, especially one like ours, where we're trying to set up a kind of society that hasn't been seen in the West since civilisation began 10,000

years ago. But this book gives not just imagination in general, but provides one possible alternative, and discusses the operation of the economic and social systems. Though it is fiction, I see it almost as an actual, lived experiment which we can learn from and possibly base our own experiments on. So I recommend that book to you, and to anyone who wants to take down capitalism.

Helen: Yeah, I've heard of LeGuin. She's a feminist writer, sort of anthropological. I've also heard *Left Hand of Darkness* is good, which imagines another world where gender is completely different. It would be interesting to read the two back-to-back and compare. But back to our discussion about communalism and a possible society; there's something I've been thinking about, and this communal society idea would be a perfect space to address this issue. In a society like this, there could be forums and conversations for women and men of different classes and people of colour to discuss, confront, and address privilege, racism, sexism, prejudice at large and among one another. This would be an opportunity for us to call one another on sexist, racist, classist, or privileged comments or actions. We could work together to overcome our internalised patterns of hierarchy, patriarchy, prejudice, racism, and privilege. Otherwise, come the revolution, the same fucked up practises and patterns will continue to reproduce and we won't be much better off. It's happened before, and if we don't actively engage and refute these tendencies, it will happen again.

Emma: Yeah, that's a really freaking good idea! And going back to what you touched on earlier, I think we can agree that class struggle does not take primacy over gender struggle, but that they must be struggled for simultaneously, as part of a larger movement against oppression, authority, and capitalism.

Helen: I think there are small differences between us; smaller than we like to let on, especially compared to the forces we need to focus on and struggle against. It's more fun to talk about these issues than to compete for ideological superiority. So let's keep talking about revolution. And besides the process, the transition, which we can leave aside for now, if all we have to argue about is the imminent utopia, a paradise, then I think we, and the anarchist and socialist schools in general, are in pretty good shape.

Emma: Yeah, totally. And we don't have to forget about the process. We can talk and dialogue during the process. We should be fluid, and willing to change, not going into the revolution with a rigid dogma, 10 steps for how to change the world. Rather than making dialogue precede action, we can make dialogue run parallel with, and interact with, action.

Emma and Helen help pack up the serving equipment as the last person is fed and the food runs out. They say bye to the other Food Not Bombs kids.

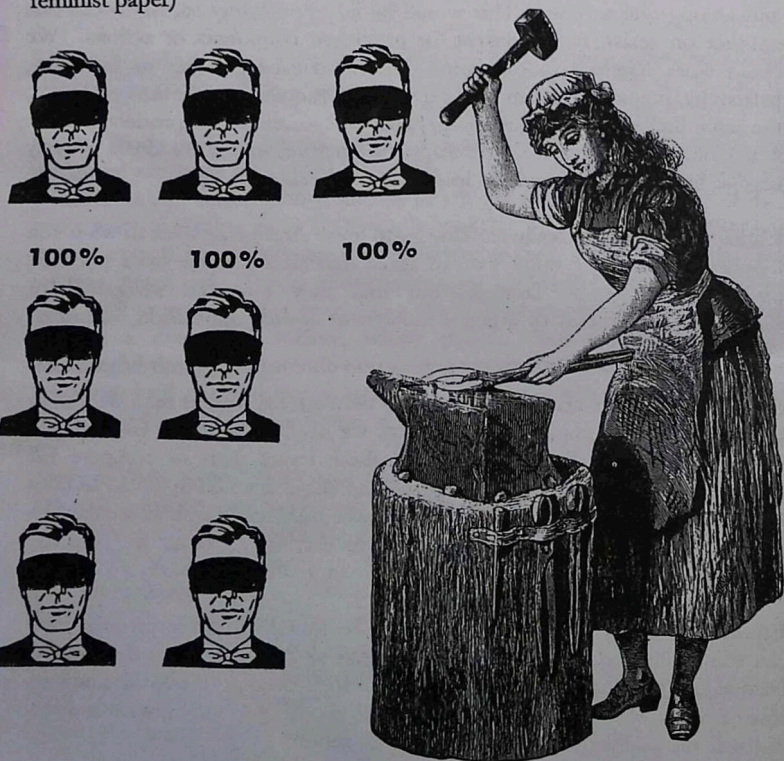
Emma: Are you coming to next week's feed?

Helen thinks for a moment.

Helen: Yes. Yeah, I will be here. Hey, do you want a ride?

[END]

We shall always be ready, when the hour of combat sounds from the clock of human consciousness, to run forward and either win or die for anarchy [and the liberation of women and all beings]; for this cause we shall give all our intellectual and bodily energies and our final breath. — La Voz de la Mujer (1890s Argentinian anarchist feminist paper)





FOOD NOT BOMBS

The money spent by the world on weapons in one week is enough to feed all the people on Earth for a year. When millions of people go hungry each day how can we spend another dollar on war? If you feel that people need food more than bombs we want you to join us today. The next few years could profoundly change the world for generations and Food Not Bombs is working to make those changes positive for everyone.

The Food Not Bombs organization is starting several projects in our area:

- ★ Free food distribution to local people in need.
- ★ Literature tables to provide information about food, peace and justice.
- ★ Providing hot meals at demonstrations and events.
- ★ Organizing creative actions in protest of war and poverty.

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THE PEOPLE

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